



The Liberal

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Rambling Around

by Elizabeth Kelson

Our honored guest columnist is the Rev. F. James Burn, minister of St. Matthew's United Church, Richmond Hill East. Before coming to Richmond Hill he served as minister of St. Paul's United Church at Bancroft since 1959. Mr. Burn is a native of Janetville and a graduate of Lindsay Collegiate Institute. He received his B.A. degree from McMaster University in 1953 and his B.D. degree from Emmanuel College in 1956.

In the summer of 1953 Mr. Burn served in the mission field at Stone, Saskatchewan and during the following summers he saw service in the mission charge at Goulais River in Ontario. He was ordained at Brockville in 1956 in the Bay of Quinte Conference and settled at Sharbot Lake in the Kingston Presbytery where he ministered for three years. Since he became the minister of St. Matthew's he was made the convener of Christian Education for York Presbytery and he is also a member of the Field Administration Committee of the Board of Christian Education.

Mr. and Mrs. Burn have four children, Eleanor 8, Margaret 6, Nancy 4 and Kevin 2.

It is a pleasure to have Rev. F. J. Burn's Christmas message in this column.

A Christmas Message

BY REV. F. JAMES BURN

As we walk or drive through the town during these pre-Christmas days, we are enchanted by the colored lights that decorate it. They are used with wonderful imagination. For many, they are part of the trappings of a festive holiday; for some, the lights are symbolic of a holy event... the birth of the Christ Child, the coming of the Son of God into the world.

St. John, in his gospel, used the symbol of light to describe to his readers the impact of Christmas upon their lives. He writes "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (1:4 R.S.V.) In this thought he was echoing the tremendous insight Isaiah proclaimed, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (9:2 R.S.V.)

This light has overcome much darkness in the world. It has been instrumental in education, both in the humanities and the sciences, in human relations — labour-management, racial and social welfare, and in justice. The Christian way of life and faith, of search for truth and defence of freedom has truly brought light into countless areas of the world where darkness reigned.

Unfortunately we men with our proud, selfish, earthbound nature often choose the shadow of darkness rather than the glory of light. We fail to reflect the light of Christ in our relationships, and we are content to leave many of the children of God in the darkness of ignorance, poverty, suffering, and fear, even as we sing the words of the Scottish carol,

"He comes the prisoners to release,
To clear the inward sight,
And on the eyeballs of the blind,
To pour celestial light.
He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure;
And with the treasures of his grace
To enrich the humble poor."

The candle power is available to enlighten the world, but its distribution depends on the dedication and concern of individuals like you and me. We can decide whether our brightly coloured lights symbolize the prosperity of a favoured people celebrating a festive season or the light of a birth, which gives hope of opportunity and eternity to all mankind.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with joy and happiness.

Flashback

In Years Gone By

Items gleaned from files of "The Liberal", the home paper of this district since 1878.

As the year 1889 drew to a close, an epidemic of "La Grippe" or influenza was sweeping the world. It was reported decreasing in France and Russia but increasing elsewhere, particularly in Africa.

The Dowager Empress Augusta of Germany died of the disease and the King of Spain was ill but expected to recover. The Czar of Russia had recovered from an illness, at first thought to be influenza, but later diagnosed as an attempt to poison him by nihilists.

In the United States, Andrew Carnegie, the Pittsburgh millionaire, had a severe attack of la grippe. Baltimore physicians said there were 50,000 persons in that city suffering from la grippe and from 20 to 50% of the pupils of Boston schools were absent from classes because of this disease.

A humorous poem on the subject was included in an issue of "The Liberal".

THE UNIVERSAL MALADY

Why is all the house so dismal?
Papa's got the grippe.
Why this look that's so abysmal?
Papa's got the grippe.
Why this coughing and this sneezing?
Papa's got the grippe.
Why this blowing and this wheezing?
Papa's got the grippe.
Why that tone and manner freezing?
Papa's got the grippe.

What's this turmoil and confusion?
Mamma's got the grippe.
She knows well it's no illusion;
Mamma's got the grippe.
Back and head and eyes are aching;
Brain feels heavy, knees are shaking;
Don't the children get a raking?

Mamma's got the grippe.

Why this howling and this yelling?
Baby's got the grippe.

When! of all his woes he's telling,
Baby's got the grippe.

What a squirming, what a kicking,
Just as if a pin is sticking
In his tender flesh and pricking,
Baby's got the grippe.

Oh, for some relief effective
From this cursed gripe!
Oh, for some new fierce
Invective

To describe the gripe!
When you've taken six or seven
Quinine pills and need eleven
More it makes you sigh for heaven,
Where there's no more gripe.

—Somerville Journal
(Not much change in 75 years, is there? Ed. Note).

"THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS"

The author of this favorite children's poem, an eminent New York divinity professor, felt his creation was beneath his dignity and would not admit he wrote it for 20 years.

SCOTCH PINES

Some 30,000 families in the United States will purchase Ontario-grown Scotch Pines this year, at a retail price of \$9 to \$10.

Second Thoughts

BY GEORGE MAYES

• Yesterday's news is not necessarily dead

With most of Britain's Christmas liquor stocks destroyed in a multi-million dollar fire and with Quebec's Liquor Board strike still on, our Ontario Christmas and New Year's will have, in this respect, some additional aspects of Thanksgiving.

And something else to be thankful for is that the Toronto papers, with that other thing still fresh in their mind, didn't take the story of our six Beatle-mopped high school students being confined in the school's "health room" and head it with: "From Fanny Hill To Sani-Hill."

"How to keep workers down on the farm is the crucial question Ontario producers must answer"—Labor Minister Rowntree, addressing the Ontario Food Processors Association. . . Well, they say you can't keep a good man down but they might try giving him a TV to keep him up and then he wouldn't be quite so good.

LONDON (Reuters) — Princess Margaret has declined an invitation to visit Canada next March for the 25th anniversary celebration of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. . . Aw, c'mon Meg, Winnipeg's way over in the middle of the country—and you COULD come in via Vancouver.

OTTAWA (CP)—Brig. J. B. Allan, 50, recently retired vice quarter-master-general of the Canadian Army was charged yesterday with bribery and conspiracy in the alleged acceptance of benefits totaling more than \$8,000 between 1957 and 1963. . . Now, with the other unsavoury news coming from the capital, we can see what the French-Canadians might have had in mind with their demands for "equal opportunities" in government service.

OTTAWA (CP) — Col. J. L. G. Poulin, 47, of Quebec City and Montreal, takes over as commandant of the Royal Canadian School of Infantry at Camp Borden, Ont., Jan. 18, National Defence HQ announced yesterday. . . Hmmm? Infiltration from the top?

The Nine Points Of The Law— Ontario's Royal Commission on Civil Liberties heard a brief last week from the Toronto Peace Centre asking, among other things, that policemen's guns should be replaced by weapons firing tranquilizer-loaded darts. . . Quick Watson, the needle!

Setting endurance records under the shower is the current college caper in the States—with the "world's" record rising from 13 to 24 hours in the first week. This is ONE athletic event Canada should "win easy", no matter how high the record goes—if we can just get San-dra to trade her TV tub for a shower.

Our high school principal's request that Beatle-browed students should have their tops trimmed brought the statement from one father that the principal could only have some say in the haircuts of his son when he paid for them. . . What haircuts?

The Question Of The Week— If, as Prime Minister Pearson says, the red maple leaf flag is our Christmas present, "Where", a lot of us ask, "is the exchange office?"

. . . and may your Christmas turkey be big enough for all of you and yours to have "second" thoughts.

OTTAWA REPORT

by JOHN ADDISON M.P.

Christmas is the time of the year when we all remember the beginning, think of the past, and anticipate the future.

I had the opportunity this year of visiting Israel and travelling near the Holy City through Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee. There I stayed at a kibbutz on the Israel-Jordanian border, where fighting had broken out the day before. An historic land full of the memories of Jesus Christ and here almost two thousand years ago one man gave meaning to our civilization.

When we think of the words: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men", Canadians are proud of their contributions to maintaining world peace and the betterment of man's life.

For years we have had the technical ability to manufacture and assemble atomic weapons; we have not done this but rather have turned our efforts towards the peaceful use of the atom. Our prime purpose in advocating a United Nations peace-keeping force, with Canada making a full contribution is to settle the international disputes before any escalation takes place.

Canada next year has pledged 80 million dollars to the Colombo Plan in south-eastern Asia to initiate a higher standard of living in these underdeveloped countries.

As a person travels through foreign lands, his perspective broadens and it becomes abundantly clear that the underdeveloped countries' main concern is to defend themselves, maintain their independence, and raise their standard of living. They look to us and the United States for support. To keep us strong both militarily and economically is in their best interest and the over-riding considerations of the government in Ottawa and Washington must be the predication of this principle.

John Addison

"Fog Index" At Christmas

What some writers have correctly referred to as a "fog index" exists in much of life to-day. It is very evident in writing and thinking but it also exists in politics and international statesmanship. When we speak to one another we have difficulty in making ourselves understood. If we cannot understand one another how can we ever come to the place where we transmit what we think to another? How is your "fog index"? When we were young our parents and friends often had difficulty getting through to us at times, but then we threw up a terrific barrier. It is a sobering thought to realize that each one of us has a "fog index".

Christmas, too, has its own "fog index". When you get busy enough about many things you will soon find that you have lost the real purpose of your activity. Busyness has a therapeutic value, but it is also deadening in the realm of the spirit. We do no clear thinking and devout living unless we are absolutely certain about our destiny. Is our life motivated by men's ideas or ideals or by what God would have us be? Where are we going at Christmas? What is our purpose? By the time you see through all the smoke of the candles, the January bills have arrived and your "fog index" is away up again and so is your blood pressure.

But not only are we fogged up as to our destination, we cannot even see our path. We would not drive our car headlong through a fog. But that is the way we live . . . even at Christmas. Let us stop for a moment and watch those who were fogged up at that first Christmas. Some could see. . . The wise men had time to look up and they saw a star that led them out of the fog. . . The shepherds stopped and listened and heard the angels sing and were led out of the fog. . . And Simeon in the temple, out of his contemplation, knew the fullness of God's plan and was led out of his fog. . . And Mary and Joseph, hearing the voice of the Lord, followed and were led out of the fog. But there were hundreds of pilgrims, the innkeeper, and Herod, and the soldiers who would kill the little children . . . they were all in a fog.

Lead us out of the fog of our life is our Christmas prayer; for our fog is SIN and HE CAME AS THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND.

The Lights Of Christmas

"When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." —Matthew 2:10.

Christmas lights symbolize the coming of Christ as the Light of the World and call to mind the star that shone to guide the three wise men to the manger which sheltered the newborn babe.

For centuries candles have been placed in windows on Christmas Eve to show the Christ-child a home where He is welcome or to help light Him on His way.

Residents of Richmond Hill and district are certainly providing the lights of Christmas on and around their homes. An after-dark trip through the residential streets of our town is truly a visit to fairyland. So many householders have used electric lights to take the place of candles and have used them effectively on their homes and on trees and shrubberies. They are to be commended for their contribution to the joy of the Christmas season.

Also adding to the Christmas scene are the town's street decorations on Yonge Street. Each year members of the hydro commission's staff revamp these decorations and add something new. They are also responsible for erecting them in good time to remind people that the festive season is approaching. High above Yonge Street the spire of Richmond Hill United Church, lighted in seasonal colors, is a beacon easily recognized from a distance.

It seems that this year merchants have outdone themselves in decorating their places of business in the Christmas theme, as well as providing a really diversified selection of well displayed merchandise for their customers. More and more people have learned it is not necessary to leave our community for Christmas shopping.

"The Liberal" joins with its readers in saying "thank you" to all these public-spirited citizens.

Windowless Schools?

Recent claims by Irvine Boigon, Toronto architect, that where proper ventilation, lighting and planting exist inside windowless classrooms prevent distractions from outside traffic and the glare of sunlight, have been hotly contested by other specialists in school accommodations.

Architect Alexander Leman has urged architects and school boards to "avoid climbing on the band wagon of windowless schools".

"Talk about windowless rooms if you must, but for God's sake don't talk about windowless schools," he pleaded. "Pupils need sunlight. Windows are a necessity. This talk about windowless schools is harmful . . . it's a new cliché."

City office workers, working in the new glass and steel buildings, have found ventilation is not always up to specifications. Recently, during a power failure in New York City these workers became panic-stricken when the ventilating system failed to renew the oxygen in the supply of air and non-operating elevators stranded them several stories above the street level where the nearest supply of fresh (?) air was available. Provision had not been made for an emergency supply of air.

Should power or equipment failure interfere with ventilation in windowless schools, consequences could be very serious.

White Pine Is 350 Years Old

What is possibly the oldest and largest white pine tree in south central Ontario has recently been brought to the attention of the Department of Lands and Forests. The tree is located in a 100-acre hardwood bush on the sixth concession of Markham Township belonging to the Ratcliffe Bros. of Stouffville.

The age of the tree has been estimated at about 350 years, and it has a d.b.h. of 45 inches. When the big white pine was first cut in this country, this tree was passed over probably because of its small size, but it has since grown to a height of 130 feet. The top has been dead for the last 50-60 years, unfortunately, thus

putting an end to any further height growth. The tree is 80 feet of clear stem to a top diameter of between 24 and 30 inches. It is estimated that such a tree would produce between 2500 and 3000 f.b.m. of lumber, or enough wood to construct about 2½ houses, but Howard Ratcliffe estimates the volume at around 4000 f.b.m. based on his experience with a similar tree which was cut down some 20 years ago.

The bush in which the tree is found has been in the Ratcliffe family for several generations, and consequently the tree has been known about for quite some time. Mr. Ratcliffe recalls the tree when he was a

boy and remembers that it was not cut because his father felt it should be preserved. The Ratcliffe Brothers still feel that the tree should be preserved and in time they hope to construct a nature trail so that all interested people will be able to see the tree. This is considered a very realistic and worthwhile approach by the government. We have all read and been told by the "old-timers" how Ontario was once covered in forests of huge white pine. The era of these trees has long since passed and it is of great interest that one of these forest giants can be preserved. Only then are we able to realize what our bountiful forests of the past once yielded.

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